

Applic. No. 10/782,324
Response Dated January 3, 2006
Responsive to Office Action of November 28, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A locking configuration, comprising:

an adjustable steering column;

a fixed mounting;

a tilt-adjustable casing tube secured on said fixed mounting, said tilt-adjustable casing tube surrounding said adjustable steering column;

a locking device provided between said fixed mounting and said tilt-adjustable casing tube, said locking device having an actuating lever ~~pivotal~~ pivotally mounted about a pivot point between a locking position and a release position such that ~~said actuating lever pivots~~ laterally next to or below said tilt-adjustable casing tube and such that the release position is below the locking position;

~~said locking device having a handle component for~~ disposed at a free end of said actuating lever, said handle component being disposed at a given distance from said tilt-adjustable casing tube when said actuating lever is in the locking position; and

said actuating lever having an angled region formed with a predetermined buckling point between said pivot point and said handle component and being configured as a deformation element for absorbing energy wherein said actuating lever is plastically deformable in a crash such that said handle component moves toward said tilt-adjustable casing tube.

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Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (previously presented): The locking configuration according to claim 1, wherein said angled region is a hook-shaped bent region adjacent said handle component.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The locking configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said actuating lever has a cross-sectional profile selected from the group consisting of a rectangular profile and a T-shaped profile; and

said angled region having a reduction in cross section for forming a predetermined buckling point.

Claim 5 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said actuating lever is formed of metal; and

said handle component has a metal core with a plastic coating and is screwed to said actuating lever.

Claim 6 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said actuating lever is formed of steel;

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said handle component has a metal core with a plastic coating; and

said actuating lever and said handle component are connected to one another as a two-part element.

Claim 7 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 1, including:

a steering-column cladding surrounding said locking device and said tilt-adjustable casing tube;

said steering-column cladding having a receiving trough formed therein for accommodating said handle component; and

said receiving trough extending in a direction toward said tilt-adjustable casing tube and having a recess formed therein for providing a pass-through for said actuating lever.

Claim 8 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 7, wherein said steering-column cladding is configured as a deformation element for absorbing impact energy.

Claim 9 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 7, wherein:

said handle component has a side facing away from said steering column; and

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said side of said handle component facing away from said steering column is disposed substantially flush with said steering-column cladding when said actuating lever is in the locking position.

Claim 10 (original): The locking configuration according to claim 7, including deformation elements provided between said tilt-adjustable casing tube and said steering-column cladding.

Claim 11 (currently amended): In combination with a vehicle having an adjustable steering column, a fixed mounting and a tilt-adjustable casing tube secured on the fixed mounting and surrounding the adjustable steering column, a locking device, comprising:

an actuating lever ~~pivotal~~ pivotaly mounted about a pivot point between a locking position and a release position ~~such that said actuating lever pivots laterally next to or below the tilt-adjustable casing tube and such that the release position is below the locking position;~~

a handle component connected to said actuating lever at a free end thereof distal from said pivot point, said handle component being disposed at a given distance from the tilt-adjustable casing tube when said actuating lever is in the locking position; and

said actuating lever having an angled region formed with a predetermined buckling point between said pivot point and said handle component and being configured as a deformation element for absorbing energy wherein said actuating lever is plastically deformable in a crash such that said handle component moves toward the tilt-adjustable casing tube.